

Kenya Trip October 21-November 6, 2020

Saturday October 24

After another good breakfast, we met Alex, the veterinarian that Randy has been working with on their Community Empowerment project. One of the objectives of the trip was for us to meet Alex, and find out how knowledgeable he was and if he was the right person to be involved with this project. Randy wanted to make sure that he could rely on the information that Alex was sharing with the people they wanted to help start agriculture projects.

We started by visiting the area where all of the feed mixing business were located. In Kenya various business seem to all locate in the same area, one area containing building supplies, another vehicle repairs, another kitchen supplies. The feed area comprised several blocks, and while I made no attempt to count them, had to have been 50 or more small shops that either sold various premixed feeds and other ag supplies, or blended them for specific customers and general sales.

Alex took us to a blending facility where he trusted the owner and the quality of feeds and ingredients. The owner greeted us with open arms, and showed us anything we wanted to see. Ed and I were both surprised and pleased with the amount and variety of feeds and ingredients available in Kenya. There were many ingredients from companies that we were both familiar with, and it was obvious that we would be able to formulate premixes and feeds to meet a wide variety of needs throughout the region.

We visited several other shops, including one who was just starting in business, the father having his own farm, and wanting to start this business for his children to become involved with. He and his family are Believers, and want their business to not only provide personal income, but to be able to support other ministries.



Alex then took us to his shop where he is starting a small dairy premix business. We talked a lot about different ingredients he is using, and he and Ed are having discussions about how to improve and grow his premix business. While I was sitting in a chair watching them packaging and labeling their premix, a young boy entered the open door and sat right beside me. Without looking at him, I reached over and gave him a gentle fist bump on his knee to acknowledge him.



He broke out into a huge grin and put his arm around me. We were able to get a couple of pictures together, and later I saw him bragging to the other children in the area. We were probably the first Muzungu's - white skins - they had ever seen. We experienced a lot of children looking at us, pointing at us, and the braver ones coming up and greeting us.

In the afternoon we visited a small dairy farm that makes all of their milk into yogurt, which they sell in shops throughout Thika. They had about 8 cows, and were also buying milk from some other small dairy farms. They were making plain, vanilla, and strawberry yogurts, and had started a line with added probiotics. It was a very clean and neat operation, and we had the chance to sample the goods, and they were delicious.

The operation started when someone gave the wife a couple of chickens, and she decided to start a business that would support them, and today in addition to the dairy, they have a breeding flock of both meat and layer chickens. They have a hatchery where they hatch their own eggs and sell anything from day-old chicks up to 4 weeks of age. They also hatch for other growers, and will also start their chicks to about 4 weeks of age. The interesting thing is that the whole operation is built on the hillside, so that you had to take stairs to each different enterprise. The house was on the top level, the yogurt manufacturing and hatchery on the second level, the chickens on another level, and the dairy cows on the bottom level.



That night for supper we met Jeffery - a Kenyan who has been living in Lancaster, PA for more years than he lived in Kenya. He is starting an export company, starting with Kenyan coffee, that is beginning to export to US. He was visiting friends and family in Nairobi, knows Ed and Randy pretty well, and it was a good chance to connect while we were all were in Kenya.

It was noisy where we were eating supper in the mall, and I felt my voice getting weaker and more hoarse as I tried to answer questions during supper. I had a slightly sore throat and had been talking a lot all day, sometimes straining to be heard as we were traveling. Randy and Bonnie both noticed it and were quite concerned as I would be doing a lot of talking over the next week and a half.

Bonnie recommended getting a blend of tea that is famous for sore throats, and is often given to people before they speak. Not surprisingly it contained ginger, honey and lemon, along with some other unknown ingredients. It burned my throat and made my eyes water, but as I finished it, I could tell it was working. I mentioned that this was Gods way of telling me to shut up and listen.